

THIRUPPAVAI

WITH

AN ENGLISH RENDERING

By

D. RAMASWAMY IYENGAR,

Advocate, Madras.

[*Second Edition*]

REPRINTED BY

Sri Visishtadvaita Pracharini Sabha

MADRAS-17

Phone: 440614

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speak of a woman, a consecrated image, a poem and an idea of the mind. These concepts are all so artistically scattered through the poem and worked into each other so wonderfully that one is unable to recall to mind any literary achievement in any language even approaching remotely this marvellous Tamil lyric. This song has been accorded by Sri Vaishnavites the highest place possible in their sacred recitals of Ubhaya Vedantha—the place even above the Vedas,—Sanskrit or Tamil. The great Ramanuja, the founder of the Visishtadwaitic Vaishnavism, is said to have been regularly reciting the verses in this poem on his outings for his *bhiksha*. But why or how this poem came to be accorded such an exalted position remains to this day a mystery unexplained even by the savants of Vaishnavism. The real explanation, however, may be surmised to be the combination in itself of all that is most calculated to appeal to a cultured and sensitive soul.

In the first place, Tiruppavai is the very essence of poetry. It is classic verse. Its subject is big. It is an idyll. It possesses Lyric warmth and beauty. It has also some of the characteristics of the ballad inclusive of a charming refrain or chorus. Its rhythm and melody are haunting. Its rhymes and alliterations seem so natural making for poetic suggestion and charm. The suggestiveness of the poem has in fact been worked up as a regular spiritual science. It is one of the finest specimens of the perfect poetic thought being embodied in equally perfect word. You may read it as an allegory. It is a simple story charmingly told. It is at once the highest philosophy and religion. It can rank also as high spiritual science. In the description of nature it is superb—a word or

phrase sufficing to conjure up a beautiful picture or landscape. The rural setting of the poem is of infinite charm. Descriptions of sounds and sights are unequalled for poetic quality. The words and expressions shine like gems chosen for being set in a perfect jewel. And above all it is indeed a great poem if only for the reason that an ardent and capable reader digging or diving into it is able to discover many a gem of purest ray serene. This process of digging and diving for hidden meanings and beauties and suggestions is bound to be infinite. No doubt there have been commentaries and commentaries ; but it seems to me that we are still a long way off from a proper and adequate commentary of this marvellous poem. It has not been apparently realised by the commentators that, according to the poet herself, it is a composition in the Tamil language of Sangam classics. The result has been grievous and has led to innumerable inaccuracies and infinite fancies in the attempted expositions.

The story of Sri Andal refusing to marry any human being, but persisting in being wedded to the Lord alone is nothing surprising to the Hindu mind. The human love, if sufficiently dynamic, is bound to lead to divine love. The human soul is but feminine in the presence of the Almighty Lord. Devotion, love and dedication are logical steps in the emotional development. No doubt love begins by claiming and hoping to possess, but it ends by becoming dedicated and possessed in a consecrated sacrifice. That is the goal of man, the end and object of life. The socalled salvation lies only in the utter dedication to the divine will and in the ecstatic at-one-ment with Him. Narayana, the Lord is the giver of all good. He alone, unto us and unto us alone, We cannot attain it. He alone out of

His Grace must grant it. Indeed, He is Himself the ultimate good and this we can achieve only by surrendering ourselves utterly to Him. This is the Vaishnavism of Tiruppavai and no wonder it has been accepted by generations of Vaishnavites as containing the quintessence of all faith and philosophy. And so it has come to pass that Sri Andal is worshipped by all Vaishnavites as part of divinity, as embodying for them the highest ideal of their faith. She is always represented not as a Deity, but as a human being only ; as a bride, not even a wife. In fact the conception and representation of Sri Andal is that of an Eternal Bride—not even a wife after the honeymoon, but a bride bedecked as one, and about to be or just wedded to the Lord. Such is the human soul, or ought to be.

No wonder, therefore, that the author of this book should have been unable to resist the urge in him to present to the public the thoughts, the fancies, the emotions and the coruscations of illuminating sparks of new meanings and suggestions which emerge from him in his having had to live, move and have his being in the poetic and spiritual atmosphere of Tiruppavai during this last season. It matters not indeed that he has not cared to wait and polish and refine but it is nevertheless pure gold which he, having become possessed of, has felt it his duty to endow the appreciative public with.

“Vani Vilas,”
Park Town.
24-1-1946 }

V. V. SRINIVASAN.

The author of this brochure Sriman D. Rama-swami Iyengar has asked me to write an introduction. The choice is unbefitting, and undeserved. But it is always pleasant to please, where there is love and warmth. I have no other claim or merit for this, my maiden attempt.

Sri Andal's Tiruppavai is the story of an Eternal Bride. Who would not like to know of Her love and Her wooing ? It will be cherished as long as humanity lasts. It will please as long as beauty pleases.

These hymns have captured the imagination of the high and low ; their virtues are as much as our own intellectual gifts. For ages, seers and saints have drunk deep at this fountain of love and bliss and have left the indelible mark of their appreciation of this quintessence of spiritual truths. The common man with no spiritual awakening, starts reading it like a dream but soon he pulsates in tune with the Infinite and the journey from the human to the divine, from matter to spirit, is smooth, easy and natural, as the day-break follows a dark night, and he finds himself transported to the land of bliss and eternal joy and transcendental reality. Who else can do this excepting our Andal ? And Tiruppavai is the expression of such an experience.

These poems have many charms, literary, artistic, cultural and spiritual. It is difficult to classify them and assort them. They are all blended in one complete harmonious unity. Tiruppavai or Sweet Song, as it is so sweetly called, has stood the the tests of dissection and research in every age and has come out, as the author of the booklet has aptly put, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." Its literary finish is *par excellence*. The ideas are simple and the language is more than simple, even to the uninitiated. But to the initiated it is a treasure-house of the most lofty spiritual truths, aptly described again as the very essence of the Upanishads. Every word in these poems, according to the commentators, connotes an infinite variety of meanings all referring to His divinity and His mani-

festations and what He means to us, mortals. The layman often wonders at these commentaries, if he stops short there, and does not seek the necessary elucidation from an acharya. Judged even by the modern standards of good poetry, Tiruppavai stands supreme as a perfect poem. It touches the inner chords of our being and is unparalleled for its sublimity of thought, its unity of conception, and unity of execution. True art is concealed art. And is there a greater artist than Andal, our blessed mother herself ?

Tiruppavai has a special significance at the present day. The whole world is chaotic and is now torn asunder by wars and intrigues, and true peace is not even in sight. The message of Tiruppavai is love and service. Love God and love your fellowmen, serve God and serve your fellowmen. This message has been ringing in our ancient land since the beginning of time and should we not take it to heart, at least now when we are so distressed, and translate it into action in our daily lives ? Then this warring world—will anybody deny this—will change itself into Heaven on Earth, to every one of us and to all of us:

So far as I know, commentators have not touched upon one aspect of Tiruppavai, probably because they were not interested in it,—its historical aspect. Andal's period is mentioned as at the beginning of the Kali Yuga. Her poems must naturally reflect the life and civilisation of that period—its society, its culture, its thoughts and the values of life then cherished. India, even at that remote age, judged by the picture portrayed by Andal, had such a rich heritage which we can be proud of even at the present day. At the same time it is an eye-opener about the life and the living modern conditions around us. We wish the so-called advanced races in the world to take a lesson from this page of Indian history of Andal's days.

In the rendering of Tiruppavai into English, the author of this booklet has done a distinct, and I hope, invaluable service to the young men of this part of the

country, especially Vaishnavites. English has got such a strong hold on them that they very often pay no heed to what is not written in English. To such of them this booklet is bound to be interesting and we invite their attention for a perusal. More than this myself and the author do not hope for. Even if it could create a little interest in this great literature, the labours of this sincere and earnest author in my opinion would reap a rich reward.

The best foreword for Tiruppavai for all times has been expressed by two of our Intellectual giants. Sri Ramanuja, the founder of Sri Vaishnavite Philosophy, liked to be called Tiruppavai Jeer, when he had numerous other titles and appellations of honour and distinction. Tradition has it that he chanted Tiruppavai everyday, till the end of his lifetime, for the good of himself and for the good of posterity. The other Acharya Sri Parasara Bhattar, a distinguished genius and a bright star in the firmament of Vaishnavite Acharyas, held Tiruppavai in very high esteem. God Almighty Himself became so captivated by his intellectual powers and wide popularity that He called him to his eternal rest, at the age of 32. It is said that in his last days when he had a carbuncle on his back, the only anaesthetic he would resort to, was the chanting and the hearing of Tiruppavai songs. This hypnotised him, and the surgeon was able to operate on the carbuncle without the patient even feeling the surgical attention rendered to him.

I shall conclude by thanking the author for giving me this opportunity of juvenile expression and prescribing Tiruppavai as the best sweet tonic for both soul and body at all times and to all mortals.

“Ranjini”
Thyagarayanagar, }
14—1—’46

V. RAMA IYENGAR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The Eternally-Wakeful awakened and the Primordial Teacher taught ! These are the feats which the Girl-God Goda performs in Her best Song, Tiruppavai. (She is herself a Tiru(p)Pavai—a Divine Girl). Though she has sung 143 other Stanzas it is by these 30 Tiruppavai Stanzas, that She is most widely known. In fact one month—the Margali (December—January) month—has been set apart by the Sri Vaishnavite Savants of yore for the enjoyment of this great work of religious art. Tiruppavai recitations in the temples, Tiruppavai Bhajanas in the streets, and Tiruppavai lectures in societies and meeting places—that is the importance Tiruppavai has always received and still continues to receive in a large measure during the Margali month. The great Sri Vaishnava Acharyas from Sri Ramanuja downwards have all without exception given expression to their fascination for this poem. Several learned and enjoyable commentaries have been written upon this Goda-Upanishad, as it is claimed to be. In the Tamil language the 4000 verses are the Vedas and this Tiruppavai among them is the Vedanta or Upanishad. Its spiritual value is supreme, and its poetical value is very high. As a human document its value is as immense as it is eternal.

No apology is therefore needed for one more edition of this great small work—great in grandeur though small in size. But an apology is certainly needed for this English rendering of it. The only one that I can put forward is my desire to see that even those who cannot or will not read Tamil should obtain at least a fraction of the supreme benefit and pleasure that lovers of Tamil get out of Tiruppavai. In the days when Sanskrit was the ruling language and scholarship meant only Sanskrit scholarship a great religious teacher rendered the Tiruppavai into Sanskrit. These are days when English is rightly or wrongly the ruling language. It is in any event the rulers' language, and a very large proportion of the present and rising generations are at the present day steeped in English lore and they cannot take to the study of Tamil without a strain. This book is intended mainly for them. And it is written not with a view to furnish a substitute for the study of Tipuppavai

in the original but as an introduction to its study. What has been attempted here is for that reason a literal translation and not a liberal paraphrase.

I am perfectly well aware that no translation can ever do full justice to the beauties of the original; for each language has a genius of its own in sense and sound, which baffles translation into another language. And when the original is a supreme work of poetic art and religious merit, the best of translations is certain to be nowhere within miles of the beauties of the original. Had I not known that Tiruppavai is far too superior and sublime a work to be spoilt or besmirched by my shabby and clumsy attempts I would not have dared to do what I have done.

I place this little book as a humble offering at the feet of Sri Andal in the full hope that She and Her good devotees will pardon the many foibles that appear herein. If any person anywhere by a perusal of this booklet entertains a desire to study for himself this sweet Song of the Soul with all its freshness and flavour in the Tamil original, the purpose of my publishing this will have been amply served.

This book is very lucky indeed to have secured the blessings of such a great and true Sri Vaishnava as Sriman V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar and the warm approval of such a devout votary of Sri Andal as Sriman Dr. V. Rama Iyengar. My grateful thanks are due to the two gentlemen for the readiness with which they acceded to my request to enrich this publication by a Foreword and an Introduction.

May Goda grant that an ever increasing number of men and women—old and young—take to and enjoy the vast and varied beauties of Her glorious work with all ardour and fervour!

Mylapore, }
1-2-1946. }

D. RAMASWAMY

திருப்பாவைத் தனியண்கள்

— — —

நீளாதுங்கள்தநகிரிதமைப்பதமுத்போத்ய க்ருஷ்ணம்
பாராச்தயம் ஸ்வம் ச்ருதிசதசிரளித்தமத்யாபயந்தி
ஸ்வோச்சிஷ்டரயாம் ஸ்ரஜி நிகனிதம் யா பலாத்க்ருத்ய புங்கதே
கோதா தஸ்யை நம இதமிதம் பூய ஏவாஸ்து பூய :

— — —

அன்ன வயக்புதுகை யாண்டான் அரங்கற்குப்
பன்னு திருப்பாவை பல்பதியம்—இன்னிசையால்
பாடிக் கொடுத்தாள்நற் பரமாலை பூமாலை
குடிக் கொடுத்தாளைச் சொல்லு.

குடிக் கொடுத்த சூடர்க்கொடியே ! தொல்பாவை
பாடி யருளவுல் பல்வகையாய் !—நாடி நீ
வேங்கடவற்கு என்னைதியென்ற இம்மாற்றம்
தாம் கடவா வண்ணமே நல்கு.

ஆண்டான் திருவடிகளே சரணம்.

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All Glory to Sri Andal

“TIRUPPAVAI”

(The Morning Song of Margali Month)

PROLOGUE

A very brilliant moon-light night. The scene is laid in Gokulam, the land of cows, cow-herds, and Sri Krishna. The full moon is well up in the sky, the hour being about 9 P. M. In the village common are gathered a large number of dainty damsels, all of them in their teens, each dressed and bedecked to perfection. The varying hues and tints of their colourful dresses seem to paint the very moon-light. Each face is aglow with an amount of suppressed excitement and anticipatory joy.

For, they have all been just released from the dungeons of their respective houses wherein they were imprisoned for the last several weeks by their elders. Those elders in their wisdom thought the punishment was necessary to cure the girls of their longing for Sri Krishna's company, a longing which promised to become an incurable disease. And so the young hearts pined away in solitude and desolation, and every moment tearful and frantic prayers were being wafted up over the air in all the metrebands, And the girls' messages were duly picked up by the BOY. Sri Krishna who could teach the old ones a lesson or two soon manoeuvred the release of the girls. It was in this wise. He first saw to it that the monsoons failed and the land became dry. How can the land of cows thrive if there is no grass and no water? There was a threat of impending famine. The wiseacres of Gokulam met in conclave and decided that the

rain inviting Katyayanee Vratam should at once be observed. That was to be done only by maidens,—those very girls whom they had thrown in the dungeons. The Vratam, or Nonbu as it is called in Tamil, required a boy to be the master of the ceremonies to help the girls. To their chagrin the old men found that to officiate as such master of the ceremonies there was no one but Sri Krishna fit, able, and willing. So they ate the humble pie and released the girls and asked them to put themselves in touch with Sri Krishna and observe the Nonbu in the right orthodox style.

And so here are the girls in high glee, their faces beaming with joy at the unexpected reunion with the Krishna of their hearts. As is not unusual with a gathering of ladies, there is a confused babel of voices, each girl in the fullness of her excitement talking about how to set about the pleasant task of repairing to Sri Krishna's place and obtaining from Him all that they and their elders want from Him. Then spake the leader among them,—she, to whom the rest of them always turned for advice, guidance and support. Tall, graceful and exceedingly attractive, she looked round the gathering with her dark bright eyes,—as dark and bright as Sri Krishna Himself—and lifting up the palm of her soft little hand to enjoin silence began to deliver herself in a rich and beautiful voice. And what she then said is the first Stanza of Tiruppavai.

But before we proceed to the song Tiruppavai we must know about the Songstress,—that Divine Poetess whose great gift to us is this masterpiece of all literature,—Tiruppavai. The Vratam or Nonbu set out above has been talked about in some of the puranas and elsewhere too. But it was Goda, Sri Andal as she is popularly known, that elevated it to

the level of a magnificent Epic. This divine Girl was the foster-daughter of Sri Vishnuchitta, better known as Periyalwar, of Srivilliputtur, now in Ramnad District: She was God-mad from her infancy—a rare malady—and made up her mind to marry God and none but God. She is nevertheless a historical person. (Research scholars are not wanting who deny her historicity. The 173 Tamil stanzas she has left and the large literature written about her during the last several centuries disprove the theory recently trotted out that she is an imaginary being who never was). Her life story even like Sri Krishna Charitra has a sweetness all its own. And it lives and lingers in the mind,—a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

Her God-love was so compelling that even from His Archa or Idol forms in temples, God was forced to come out and acknowledge her love. The local (Sri-villiputtur) God expressed a desire to wear only the flowers which previously were worn by Goda; Her first offering to God was a flower garland, "Poomalai", which was made long before she offered her lyrical garland, the "Pamalai." Then the Great Sri Ranganatha of Srirangam,—even that God of infinite repose—had to break the barriers of Idol-ism and marry her as she desired in the form of a young bridegroom. It is in that form He is now seen in Srivilliputtur,—as Ranganannar, bereft of his divine symbols,—the Shanka and Chakra.

Such was the greatness and strength of the divine love of our Songstress; and this Song is but the ecstatic outpouring of that sweet heart of that Sweetheart of God in one of its wonderful moods of divine rapture. Having heard of the story of how the Gopis observed the Katyayanees Vratam, Andal at once took

it up as a fit subject for her contemplation and enjoyment. She mentally pictures to herself everything about it in such minute detail that she literally turns into a Gopi herself. The idea grows and grows: the mind gets infatuated with it and lives and enjoys it. The enjoyment exceeds the bounds of the mind and the heart, and breaks out into lyrical rhapsody,—and that is Tiruppavai. It is not a poem of the pen but a song of the heart. Everyone can hear, nay, see it.

And now for the SONG itself.

ஶ्रீ :

ஶ்ரீமதே திகமாந்தமஹாதேசிகரய நம :
ஶ்ரீமதே ராமாநுஜாய நம :
ஶ்ரீமத்யை கோதாயை நம :

ஸ்ரீ ஆண்டாள் அருளிச் செய்த
திருப்பாவை

மார்கழித்திங்கள் மதிநிறைந்த நன்னூளால்
நீராடப்போதுவீர் போதுமிடே நெரிகழையீர் !
சீர்மல்கும் ஆய்ப்பாடிச் செல்வச் சிறுமீர்கள் !
கூர்வேல்கொடுந்தெழுமிலன் நந்தகோபன் குமரன்
ஏரார்ந்தகண்ணி யசோதை யினஞ்சிங்கம்
காச்சேமனிச்செங்கண் குதிர்மதியம்போல் முகத்தான்
நாராயணனே நமக்கேபறைதரதருவான்
பார்சேர்புகழப் படிந்தேவேரம்பாவாய்.

1.

THE SONG
(In Translation)

I

(Invocation)

Margali is the month and a full moon day at that.

[Blessed indeed are we who long for Krishna samblesha (union). For this is the month most dear to His heart and therefore to ours: and moonlight nights have best helped us in the past to spend hours with Him in divine ecstasy. The combination is auspicious and augurs well for us who have been separated from Him for some time now.]

So my dear be-jewelled damsels ! Those of you desirous of taking the bath (the important part of the Nonbu) come on ! Ye lucky little girls of prosperous Gokulam ! Know ye not that Narayana Himself,—the son of Nandagopa of cruel deeds with ever sharp spear,—the young lion-cub of Yasoda of beautiful eyes,—He with the cool cloud-like body, lotus-red eyes, and effulgent face like the full moon.—He will give us.—He alone will give us, and only to us, the Parai (Drum) (and other requisites for the Nonbu). So shall we observe the Nonbu and earn the praise and regard of the world.

[Throughout this translation the words "Elorempavai" (எலேரெம்பாவாய்) are regarded as a refrain and no meaning is given to those words. Paavai (பாவை) is a Tamil word for the Vratam or Nonbu. Tiruppavai is the sacred Nonbu. Readers will see that every one of the thirty stanzas ends in the word "Empaval" (எம்பாவாய்). In addition to the word Empavai there are two other words which precede it in 29 out of the 30 stanzas and they are the words "El" and "Or". The "Elorempavai" (எலேரெம்பாவாய்) is the refrain for almost all the stanzas of the poem. The word Pavai (பாவை) in Tamil also means girl. It has several other meanings also.]

II

வைத்துவாழ்வீர்கள் ! நாமும்நம்பாவைக்குச்
செய்யும்கிரிசைகள் கேள்வோ பாற்கடலுள்
வைத்துயின்ற பரமநடிபாடி
தெய்யுண்ணேம் பாலுண்ணேம் நாட்காலே நீராடி
உயிட்டெழுதோம் மலரிட்டு நாம்முடியோம்
செய்யாதனசெய்யோம் தீக்குறளை சென்றேதோம்
ஐயமும்பிச்சையும் ஆந்தனையும்கைகாட்டி
உய்யமாறென்னி உகந்தேலோரம்பாவாய். 2.

[The rigours of the Nonbu.]

Know, all ye denizens of the world ! (whom it may concern) what our obsevances are to be in regard to our Nonbu. We shall sing about the feet of that Transcen-

dental Person, who softly sleeps on the Ocean of Milk. We shall not take (eat) ghee and we shall not take (drink) milk. We shall bathe at a very early hour of the day. We shall not paint our eyes with Anjana (the black paste used to beautify the eyes, collyrium) or use flower in binding up our hair. We shall not do what has not been done (i. e. things prescribed by the Shastras): and we shall not go and tell harmful lies. We shall extend our alms, unsought and sought, to our utmost capacity; and ever contemplating that method by which alone we can live and thrive, we shall feel contented and happy.

III

ஒங்கியுவகளந்த உத்தமன் பேர்பாடி.
நாங்கள் நம்பாகவக்குச் சாற்றி நீஞாடினால்
தீங்கின்றிநாடெல்லாம் திங்கள் மும்மரசிபெய்து
ஒங்குபெருஞ்செந்தெனுாசியதுகள்
முங்குவளைப்போதில் பொறிவன்று கண்படுப்பத்
தேங்காதேபுக்கிருந்து சீர்த்தமுகூபற்றி
வாங்கக் குடம்நிறைக்கும் வள்ளல் பெரும்பசக்கள்
நீங்காதசெல்வம் நிறைந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

3.

[The ostensible objective of the Nonbu.]

If, singing the great names of that Purushothama who grew and grew and measured the world (as Trivikrama) we take the bath in the name of and for, the Nonbu, the whole country will be visited by the three timely rains per month and be kept from harm. (It shall become rich, prosperous and plentiful. Thus) Fish shall be seen to wriggle between the tall stalks of big red paddy. The spotted bees will lie asleep (dazed with their full feed of honey) within the petals of the Neelothpala flower. (So much for the richness of the fields: now for the richness of the village). And big lavishly yielding cows shall yield milk at the mere touch

of their stout teat,—milk that will fill the big vessels placed underneath in quick succession, milk that is so profuse and plentiful that none but the strong and sturdy can undertake the task of milking. Such unperishable and unfailing wealth shall fill (the country round).

IV

ஆழிமழக்கண்ணு ! ஒன்று நீக்கரவேல்
ஆழியன்புக்கு முகந்துசெரடு ஆர்த்தேறி
ஆழிமுதல்வனுருவம்போல் மெய்கறுத்து
பாழியந்தோனுடைப் பற்பநாபன்கையில்
ஆழிபேரங்மின்னி வலம்புரிபோல் நின்றதிர்ந்து
தாழரதோர்ங்க முகத்தத் சரமழபேரல்
வாழ உலகினில் பெய்திடாய் நாங்களும்
மர்கழி நீராட மகிழ்ந்தேலோழம்பாவாய்.

4.

[The invocation to the god of Rain. A beautiful stanza rich in language and imagery. Note the name given to the Rain-god. Mazbaikkanna (மழக்கண்ணு). All gods are Kannai or Krishna to them.]

Oh you rain god ! please do not withhold or stint your gift to any the slightest extent, (This is how we request you to set about to help us). Get into the depths of the deep (seas), devour deep and full, and then ascend into space roaring the while. Then get thick and black in appearance, as black as the First and Primordial Cause of the world : dazzle by your lightning even like the resplendant Chakra in the hand of the broad-shouldered Padmanabha : steadily roar like Sri Panchajanya (the Conch in His hand) : and pour into the world like the unceasing arrow-rain kicked out of His Saranga (bow). And so may the world flourish : and we too shall rejoice to have our Margali bath.

[A most beautiful simile has been worked to perfection here. The god of rain is being asked to copy and imitate God Himself. All the Alwars have compared God to the clouds: but here Sri Andal is comparing the clouds to God. To her God is Upamana, the known analogy with which the object of description is sought to be compared. With the Alwars God was the object and the cloud was the analogy. If the Alwars were talking from the clouds this divine Girl is talking from God. Does it not give one an insight into Her God-soaked heart? And again what sweet and wonderful words have been employed in the unfolding of the simile !]

V

மாயகோமன்னு வடமதுரமைந்தனை
தூயபெருநீர் யமுகைத்துறைவனை
ஆயர்குலத்தினில் தோன்றும் அணிவிளக்கை
தாயைக்குடல் விளக்கம் செய்த தாமோதரனை
தூயேரமாய்வந்துநாம் தூமலர் தூஷிததொழுது
வாயினுல்பாடி மனத்தினால் சிந்திக்க
போயபீழையும் புகுதருவான் நின்றனவும்
தீயினில்தூசாகும் செப்பேலோரம்பாவாய்.

5.

[The True objective.]

My dear girls! you all know the Mayan, (Sri Krishna the Mysterious, whose greatness is beyond description and whose actions are beyond common understanding), who was born in North Matra and who sports in the large waters of the Pure Jumna, who shines like a Ratna Deepa (Emerald lamp) among the cowherd folk, the Damodara who brought name and fame to His mother Yasoda ! We shall approach Him in all purity, We shall strew pure and choice flowers at His feet and worship Him. We shall sing about Him and we shall (unceasingly) think of Him : and thereby shall our sins, those already committed and those we are likely to commit in future, all of them disappear like cotton in fire.

[The curtain now rings down on the first scene. The first night is over. The girls have dispersed each to her home and sleep,—with the resolve to be up betimes and assemble early in the morning at the Pavaikkalam, the meeting place fixed, before they all go to Sri Nandagopa's Mansion to awake Sri Krishna to lead them to the Nonbu proper. Most of the girls could not sleep. The joy that was to come was quite overpowering. Some however, pretended to sleep, and several did not leave their beds. The second scene is set at this stage and stanzas 6 to 15 constitute the 2nd part of this delightful drama. Those who have got up, go together to the houses of those who have not, and awaken them. The words employed, now endearing, now rebuking, now teasing, but ever sweet and resonant, show what a great juggler with words Goda is. She is indeed the Goddess of speech as her name Goda indicates; and in these and in the coming stanzas we shall see it with ever increasing awe and wonder.

Several there have been before and after Sri Andal who have sung Tiruppalli Ezhuchi (or waking up from sleep) stanzas to God. The Alwars have done it. She herself does it in stanzas 17 to 22 herein. Others have done it elsewhere, in Sanskrit and in Tamil. But Andal is here singing the Tiruppalli Ezhuchi not to God but to God's devotees. These ten stanzas have no equal in any literature. And they stand equally unrivalled in the matter and manner of nature description.]

புள்ளும்சிலம்பினகாண் புள்ளவரயன் கோயில்
வென்கொ வினிசங்கின் பேரரவம் கேட்டிலையோ ?
பின்னாய் எழுந்திராய் பேய்முலிநஞ்சன்டு
கன்னச்சகடம் கலக்கறியக்காலோச்சி
வென்னத்தரவில் தூயிலமர்ந்த வித்தினை
உன்னத்துக்கொண்டு முனிவர்களும்யோகிகளும்
மென்னளமுந்து அரியென்றபேரரவம்
உன்னம்புகுந்து குளிச்ந்தேலோதெம்பாவரய்.

[A Novice in God-love is being awakened.]

Don't you hear the birds chirping ? Don't you hear the big inviting noise of the white conch sounded from the shrine of the Lord, who rides the Great Bird,

Garuda? Poor child! Get up. The munis and Yogis with their mind on Him who ate the poison at the breast of the demon (Puthana), who swung His (little) Foot to destroy the hoax-wheel (Sakatasura), who is the seed (of all things), and who reclines in sleep on the Serpent in the midst of the flood (water)—they, the munis and yogis, have slowly and softly got up from their sleep and uttered the name 'Hari'. And that name uttered by so many lips has grown in volume to a big noise and entered our hearts and gladdened them.

VII

ஈசகீர்சன்று எங்கும் ஆணைச்சாத்தன் கலந்து
பேசினபேச்சரவம் கேட்டிலீயோ? பேய்ப்பெண்ணே!
காசம்பிறப்பும் கலகலப்பக்கைபேர்த்து
வாசநறுங்குழலாய்ச்சியர் மத்தினுல்
ஒசைப்படுத்த தயிரவம்கேட்டிலீயோ?
நாயகப்பெண்பின்னாய்! நாராயணன்மூர்த்தி
கேவணப்பாடவும் நீகேட்டேகிடத்தியோ?
தெமுடையாய்! திறவேலோரம்பாவாய். 7.

[This sleeper has knowledge of God but not love of God.]

Oh! You senseless girl! (lying prone like a possessed one). Don't you hear the noise made by the Valiya (King-crow) birds screeching meaningless messages in groups? The Gopis with fragrance-wafting hair are churning curd with their hands—now lifting one and now the other—and in the act their Kasumalais and strings of beads jingle. Don't you hear that jingle? nor even the sound of the churning rod swishing through the curd? Come, come, are you not our head and chief? (Wake up). We suspect that, fully awake, you are wantonly a-bed listening to our singing about Narayana, Murthy. Kesava (and so on). Please, you bright one! open the door to us.

கீழ்வானம்வெள்ளென்று எருப்பாரியிருக்கிற
மேய்வான் பரந்தனா ஈ மி குள்ளா பிள்ளை குரும்
பேரவான்போவின்றுகூரப் போகாலேல் காத்து உன்னைக்
கவுவான்வந்து நின்பேருக் கீராதுகவழுதைய
பாவாய்! எழுந்திராய் பாடி... வாறு பீகானை ④
மாவாய்யினந்தாணை மல்லூரமாட்டிய
தேவாதிதேவகைச் சென்றுதாய்சேகித்தால்
ஆவாவென் ரூராய்ந் தந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய். 8.

[This is a girl who rejoices in God but knows not how to set about it.]

The eastern sky has whitened. The buffaloes have spread themselves out for a feed of grass during the period of short release (this is for feeding on dewygrass; the long release is during midday, when they are driven to pastures). We have kept back the other girls who were about to go to the meeting place and have come here to call you. Oh! You ever jubilant girl! Get up, If we sing about the Slayer of the horse (Kesi) and get the parai (drum) from Him and if we go to the God of Gods who rounded up the heavy-weight athletes (of Muttra) and worship Him, He will surely take pity on us and enquire (about us with mercy.)

தூமணிமாடத்துச் சுற்றும்விளக்கெரிய
தூபம்கமழத் துயிலீணாமேல்கள் வளரும்
மாமான்மகனே! மணிக்கதவம்தான் திறவாய்
மாமீர! அவனையெழுப்பிரோ? கம்மகன்தான்
கனமையோ? அன்றிச்செல்லோ? அனந்தலோ?
ஏமப்பெருந்துயில் மந்திரப்பட்டாலோ?
மாமாயன்மாதவன் வைகுந்தனென்றென்று
தாமம்பலவும் நவின்சேலோரெம்பாவாய். 9.

[A self-complacent lover of God.]

Oh! You uncle's daughter! so restfully reposing in your soft bed with lights aglow all round your

dazzling hall, and with perfumes permeating the atmosphere!—Please open the ornamental door of your chamber (Evidently the inside is seen as in an emerald). (Turning to her mother) Auntie dear! Will you kindly wake her up? Is your daughter dumb? or deaf? or is she exhausted and tired out? or could it be that she is under a spell (curse) of long sleep? (Probably that is the reason). Come on. We shall as a palliative recite His numerous names such as the Great Mayan, Madhavan, and Vaikuntan.

X

நெற்றுச்சவர்க்கம் புகுகின்ற அம்மனுய்!
 மாற்றமும்தாராரேர வாசல்திறவாதார்
 நாற்றத்துழாய்முடி நாராயணன் நம்மஸல்
 போற்றப்பறைத்தரும் புண்ணியனுவ் பண்டுதுருதான்
 கூற்றத்தின்வாய்வீழ்ந்த கும்பகரணனும்
 தோற்றும்கூக்கே பெருந்துயில்தான் தந்தானே ?
 ஆற்ற அனந்தலுடையாய் அருங்கலமே!
 தெற்றமாய்வந்து திறவேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

10

[A girl who believes too much in her own God-endeavour]

You darling! who were so keen yesterday about observing the nonbu and getting to the celestial regions! Is there a rule that people who do not open their doors should not even deign to reply? (No response even to this). Probably the Kumbakarna of old who fell before Narayana of fragrant Tulasi-adorned Head, our Benefactor who is going to give us the Parai (drum) at our request, that Kumbakarna (of perennial sleep) got vanquished (in a contest with you) and gave you in recognition of your merit his big sleeps. (At this taunt the lady inside bestirs herself and yawns widely). Yes! Yes! We see how much of laziness there is in you. But still are you not our jewels! Please get clear and come and open the door.

XI

கற்றுக்கறவைக் கணங்கள் பலகறந்து
 செற்றுர் திறலழியச் சென்றுசெருக்கொய்யும்
 குற்றமொன்றில்லாத கோவலர் தம்பொற்கொடியே!
 புற்றரவல்குல் புனமயிலே! போதராய்
 சுற்றத்துத்தோழியார் எவ்வராகும்வந்து நின்
 முற்றம்புகுந்து முகில்வண்ணன்பேர்ப்பட
 சிற்றுதேபேசுதே செல்வப்பெண்டாட்டி! நீ
 எற்றுக்குறங்கும் பெரகுளேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

11

[A girl proud of herself and her connections.]

You flower of the cow-herd race who are famous for their ability to milk several herds of milch-cattle (at a stretch), and for their prowess in vanquishing their foes by giving them faultless battle! You beautiful one of the female species, even like the peacock among birds! Come out. When we, your relations and friends, have come and are here assembled in your court-yard singing the names of the cloud-coloured (Creator) how is it that you do not move or speak. You precious and petted little one! pray let us know the meaning of your sleeping (under these circumstances.)

XII

எனித்தினங்கற்றெருமை கன்றுக்கிரங்கி
 நினைத்துமுகிலவழியே நின்றுபரல்ரேசர
 நகைத்தில்லம்சேருக்கும் நற்செல்வன்தங்காய்
 பனித்தலைவீழ நின்வாசற்கடைபற்றி
 சினத்தினுல்லென்னிலங்கைக் கோமானைச் செற்ற
 மனத்துக்கினியானைப் பரடவும்நவாய்திறவாய்
 இனித்தானெனமுந்திராய் ஈதென்னபேருறக்கம்!
 அனைத்தில்லத்தாகும் அறிந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

12

[Related to a true servant of God but lacking in initiative.]

You beloved sister of the wealthy one whose house is flooded and rendered wet and slushy by the milk pouring from the teat of the young she-buffalo, who thinks of her calf and out of the fulness of her maternal love lets the milk steadily out at the mere thought

(without any human agency)! Though we have all come to your house-front not minding even the dew that is falling on our heads (like rain) and are here singing of the Dear One of our hearts who vanquished the king of Lanka in the south by His anger, you have not opened your mouth. Please get up hereafter at least. What is the meaning of this great sleep? Every one in every house has long ago got up.

XIII

புள்ளின்வாய்க்கண்டாக்கீப் பெரல்லா அரக்கண
கிள்ளிக்கணந்தாக்கீக் கீத்திகைபாடிப்போய்
பிள்ளைகளைவல்லாரும் பாவைக்களம்புக்கார்
வெள்ளியெழுந்து வியரமழுறங்கிற்று
புன்னும்சிலம்பின காண் போதரிக்கண்ணினுய்!
குன்னக்குனிரக் குடைந்து நீராடாதே
பள்ளிக்கிடத்தியோ பாவாய்! நீ நன்னாள்
கள்ளம்தவிர்ந்து கலந்தேலேரம்பாவாய்.

13

[A girl who has enjoyed Him well but does not like others' company.]

All the girls have gone singing the prowess of Him who tore the mouth of (Bakasura who came in the shape of) a bird, and who simply clipped with his nails the bad Rakshasa (Ravana) and threw him away;— and they have all entered the Pavaikkalam (the meeting place). Venus has risen in the firmament and Jupiter has set in the western sky.* The birds have all become noisy. You with the beautiful flower-like, deer-like, eyes! Instead of plunging deep into the cool waters are you still idling in your bed? Girlie dear! this is indeed an auspicious day for all of us. Please throw off all mental reserve (or spiritual ignorance) and freely mix with us.

*[Note the astronomical references of this Girl-prodigy. The late Mr. L. D. Samikkannu Pillai has essayed to find out from this reference the period when she lived.]

உங்கள்புழைக்கடைத் தோட்டத்து வரவியுள்
 செங்கழுநீர்வாய்நெசிழ்ந்து ஆம்பல்வாய் கும்பினகான்
 செங்கல்பொடிக்கூறை வெண்பல்தவத்தவர்
 தங்கள் திருக்கோயில் சங்கிடுவான்போதந்தர்
 எங்களை முன்னாம் எழுப்புவான் வாய்பேசும்
 நங்காய்! எழுந்திராய் நானுதாய்! நாவுடையரய்!
 சங்கொடுசக்கரம் ஏந்தும் தடக்கையன்
 பங்கயக்கண்ணுளைப் பாடேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

14

[One of the leaders of these girls evidently.]

Even in the big will in your backyard the Neelotpala flower has opened its buds and the lily (ambal) flower has closed its buds. The ascetics with clothes or brick dust colour and white teeth are going to their respective temples to blow the conch and do the puja. You great lady who bragged yesterday of waking us up first! get up. You have no shame but have a tongue! Sing about the Lotus-eyed one with the broad hands bearing aloft the Chakra with the Shanka.

எல்லே! இளங்கிளியே! இன்னாம் உறங்குதியேர ?
 சில்லென் நழையேன்மின்; நங்கைமீர்! போதர்கின்றேன்
 வல்லீஉன்கட்டுரைன் பண்டேஉன்வாயறிதும்
 வல்லீர்கள் நீங்களே நானேதானுயிடுக
 ஒல்லீந்தோய் உனக்கென்ன வேறுடைய
 எல்லாரும்போந்தாரோ? போந்தார் போந்திதன்னிக்கொன்
 வல்லாண்கொன்றுளை மாற்றுரைமாற்றழிக்க
 வல்லாணை மாய்ஜைப் பாடலோரெம்பாவாய்.

15

[This lady loves God apparently to the exclusion of the God's chosen devotees.

This last stanza of this series is in the form of a dialogue.]

(The assembled girls outside); Hullo! Young Parrot! Still sleeping?

(She from inside) Don't be so biting chill in calling; Superior girls you are, I know. I am coming.

(They) You are capable of talking well. We already know your prowess in words.

(She) Well, you (who began this wordy duel are the clever and strong persons. (Pauses a while) No. I am willing to be regarded as such. (I apologise).

(They) Come soon to our midst. What is there that you desire to enjoy separately and without us?

(She) Has everyone come?

(They) Yes. They have. You come out and count for yourself. Let us hear you sing of Him who killed the powerful elephant (Kuvalayapeeta) and who is skilled in killing the enmity in His enemies.

[Here closes the second part of this song. All the girls are now gathered together and the scene shifts to the Mansion of Sri Nandagopa, the father of Sri Krishna, wherein He the Lord is sleeping with His consort Nappinnai. The poem grows in intensity and fervour.]

XVI

நாயகனுய்தின்ற நந்தகோபனுடைய
கோயிற்காப்பானே! கொடித்தோன்றும் தோரண
வாயில்காப்பானே! மனிக்கதவம் தான்திறவாய்
ஆயச்சிறுமியரோமுக்கு, அறைபறை
மரயன்மணிவண்ணன் நென்னாலே வாய்நேர்ந்தான்
துயேமாய்வத்தோம் துயிலெழப்பாடுவான்
வாயால்முன்ன முன்னம் மாற்றுதே அம்மா! நீ
நெயநிலைக்கதவம் நீக்கேலோரம்பாவாய்.

16

Oh! Gate-keeper of our overlord Nandagopa's mansion, guarding the festooned Flag-Staff-Gate! Pray be good enough to open the bolt of the belled doors. For, Sri Krishna of the colour of the blue sapphire—that Mayan of wonderful deeds—promised to us even

yesterday that He would give us, the young girl-folk of Gokulam, the resounding Parai drum. We have come in all purity to sing Him to wakefulness. We pray to you,—you are like a mother to us,—do not start by refusing our request: (you are the first to be approached by us this morning). So please open the twin heavy doors (and let us in).

XVII

அம்பரமேதன்னீரே சோரே அறஞ்செய்யும்
எம்பெருமான்! நந்தகோபாலா! எழுந்திராய்
கொம்பனுர்க்கெல்லாம் கொழுந்தே! குலனினக்கே!
எம்பெருமாட்டி! யசோதா! அறிவுறுய்
அம்பரமூட்டுத்து ஒங்கி உலகளந்த
உம்பர்கோமானே! உறங்காது எழுந்திராய்
செம்பொற்கழலடிச் செவ்வா! பலதேவா!
உம்பியும் நியும்தூங்கேலா ரெம்பாவாய்.

17

[They all go in. First Nandagopa's chamber, then Yasoda's chamber. Then Sri Krishna's bed chamber and by its side Sri Balarama's. And the young girls, having got into the house wake up the inmates in the above order in this stanza.]

Nandagopala! our King! renowned and reputed for your lavishness in making gifts of cloth. Water and food! Be pleased to get up. You Yasoda! The pick of woman-kind and a beaconlight among them! Our Queen! pray wake up. O! Lord of the Devas! Who grew and grew piercing through space (akasa) and measured the worlds! Do not sleep but get up. Prince Baladeva! with feet adorned by golden anklets! your brother and yourself—don't you go on sleeping!

[In this stanza 'Orempavai' alone is the refrain, the preceding 'el' joining as a suffix with the previous word, to give the negative meaning, don't sleep]

— — —

[This wholesale rousing has had no effect. Sri Krishna for all appearances is still asleep. And He is sleeping with His consort Nappinnai as much a Bride of His as Lakshmi or Sri. It is one of the cardinal doctrines of Sri Vaishnavism that God and Sri together are the End and the Means, the

Purusharta and the Upaya. Sri as God's consort has got an additional aspect called in Vaishnavite parlance (புருஷகாரத் வம்) Purushakhratva. It means recommendatory help. She intercedes with God for us and on our behalf and succeeds in securing us His grace. So when we realise that our own efforts are not fruitful, we invariably turn to Her for help in every way. In that mood the Girls of Gokulam, re-created by Sri Andal's fertile imagination pray to Nappinnai to get up, thinking rightly that they did a very improper thing in invoking His grace straight. She must be resorted to first before one can proceed with one's prayers to Him. The next stanza has in addition to its poetic beauty, sampradayic value also.]

XVIII

உந்து மதகளிற்றன் ஓடாததே தாள்வளியன்
நந்தகோபாலன்மருமகளே! நப்பின்னுய்!
கந்தம்கமலும்குழலீ! கடைதிறவாய்
வந்துஏங்கும் கோழி அழைத்தனகாண் மாதவிப்
பந்தல்மேல் பல்கால்குமினினங்கள் கூவினகாண்
பந்தார்விரவி! உன்மைத்துனன்பேர்பாட
செந்தாமரைக்கையால் சீரார்வாகீ யொலிப்ப
வந்துதிறவாய் மகிழ்ந்தே லோரெம்பாவாய்

18

Daughter-in-law of Nandagopala owing several sturdy elephants and having strength of shoulder that would never run away from battle! Nappinna with locks of hair that emit fragrance and perfume! please open the door! The cocks have come everywhere and crowded. From the Madhavi (also called Kurukkatti—"common delight of the woods" in English) creepers, the cuckoos are crying out repeatedly. Your fingers never release the ball but always clasp it in sport. To help us to sing (with you) your Husband's name please come to the door and with your lotus-red hand joyfully open it with the jingle of your well-fitting bangles.

[It is said that this was a favourite stanza of the great Sri Ramanuja. Nappinnai is here described as holding a ball in Her hand. That symbolises Her fondness for created beings. Sri Krishna in one hand and Sri Krishna's creation in another, She has a hold on both.]

குத்துவிளக்கிரியக் கோட்டுக்கால்கட்டில்மேல்
மெத்தென்ற பஞ்சயனத்தின்மேலேறி
கொத்தலூபூங்குழல் நப்பின்கீர்காங்கைமேல்
வைத்துக்கிடந்த மலர்மார்பா! வாய்திறவாய்
மைத்தடங்கண்ணினுய! நீ உன்மனுள்ளீர்
எத்தகீர்போதும் துயிலெழுவெட்டரய்காண்
எத்தகீர்யேலும் பிரிவாற்றகில்லரயால்
தத்துவமன்று தகவேலாரெம்பாவாய்.

19

[They sang to Him alone in two lines of Stanza 17. Then a whole stanza No. 18 to Her. Now four lines of this stanza to Him and four to Her. They are now trying to wake up a couple. Never an easy task!]

With the bright lamp (குத்துவிளக்கு) glowing beside, on the ivory bedstead, ascending on the softest of soft (silk) cotton bedding You are lying with your flower-like and broad chest on the breasts of Nappinnai, whose hair is adorned by flowers blossoming in bunches. (It may be difficult for you to get up). Won't you (at least) open your mouth? (Addressing Her) You with dark and broad eyes! You will not allow your Lover to get up from sleep at any time. For you cannot bear the slightest amount of separation. This is not as it ought to be: nor does it befit your mercy.

முப்பத்துமூவர் அமரர்க்குமுன்சென்று
கப்பம்தவிர்க்கும்கவியே! துயிலெழாய்
செப்பமுடையாய்! திறலுடையாய் செற்றூர்க்கு
வெப்பம்கொடுக்கும் விமலா! துயிலெழாய்
செப்பன்னமென்றுகீச்செவ்வாய்ச்சிறுமருங்குல்
நப்பின்கீர்நங்காய்! திருவே! துயிலெழாய்
உக்கமும்தட்டொளியும் தந்து உன்மனுள்ளீர்
இப்போதே எம்மைநீராட்டேலாரெம்பாவாய்.

20

[Much in the same strain]

Have you not anticipated the fears of the thirty three (or thirty three crores of) Devas and removed

their tremblings and tremors ? Valiant One to do all that ! please wake up. You are anxious to protect us and you have got the strength and valour needed for the protection. To those who assail (you or us) you can give heat enough. O ! Vimala ! (blameless and pure one) get up from sleep. (To Her) Our worshipful Nappinna ! with cuplike soft breasts, sweet red lips and small waist ! Are you not Tiru (Lakshmi) Herself ? Get up from sleep. Give us the fan, the mirror, and also your Husband and bathe us this very moment.

[The Tamil word for bath நீராடல் also signifies sexual bliss. One can see what wonderful depths of Godlove are being talked of by Andal in the name of Margali Nonbu.]

XXI

ஏற்றகவங்கள் எதிர்பொங்கிமீது விப்ப
மாற்றுத் தால்சொரியும் வன்னைப்பெரும்பசக்கள்
ஆற்றப்படைத்தான்மகனே அறிவாருய்
ஊற்றியூடயாய் ! பேரியாய் ! உலகினில்
தோற்றமாய்நின்ற சுட்ரே ! துயிலெழுாய்
மாற்றுஉனக்கு வலிதொலைந்துஉன்வாசல்கண்
ஆற்றுதுவந்து உன்னடிபணியுமாபோலே
போற்றியாய்வத்தோம் புகழ்ந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

21

[The vigorous assault is now weakening. The girls now sing in a tune which show the mellowing of their spirit. They now pray in a humble and forlorn mood. This and the next stanza are really studies in humility.]

Thou, Son of him who owns numberless liberal-minded and big cows which unremittingly pour milk into receiving cans placed underneath in such a manner that in a trice they get full and overflow ! pray get awake. Thou hast a great interest in us : And Thou art great. Thou art an Effulgence shining so, that (even this) world can see Thee ! Wake up prithee ! We have come to Thee praising Thy Valour and extolling Thy greatness, even as Thy foes (worsted in

battle) having lost their prowess co. Banyan leaf. That was being able to help it before Thy hous^{on}. Now we want all ship at Thy feet. ^{s the idea underlying}

[A true heroine's song. The next one ex language of kings who without a show before the conqueror,]

XXII

அங்கண்மாருவத்தரசர் அபிமான
பங்கமாய்வந்து நின்பன்னிக்கட்டிற்கீழே
சங்கமிருப்பார்போல் வந்துதலைப்பெய்தோம்
விழ்வினிவாய்ச்செய்த தரமயைப்படுப்போல
செங்கண்சிறுச்சிறிதே எம்மேல்விழியாவோ ?
நிங்கனும் ஆதித்தியனும் சமுந்தாற்போல்
அங்கணிரண்டும்கொண்டு எங்கண்மேல்தோக்குதியேவ
எங்கள்மேல்சாபம் இழித்தேலோ ரெம்பாவாய்.

23

We have sought Thee (approached Thee) like the kings of this beautiful and wide earth who are content to stay in groups and batches at the foot of Thy cot (Throne) having come to Thee after renouncing all their sense of self-glory. Oh ! Will not Thine benign Eyes, like the half-blossomed lotus resembling the small jewel-belt (round your waist), slowly and gradually open upon us ! If Thou lookest on us with both Thine eyes—like the rising moon and sun—the curse (of sins) on us will get down from us (and disappear for ever).

[Who can resist the humility, helplessness and ardour underlying these two stanzas 21 & 22 ? At least Sri Krishna could not and He has thrown off sleep and got up and sat on bed. He is next coaxed to come out of His chamber. Like what ? Let the super-poetic soul of Sri Andal speak !]

XXIII

மாரியலைமுழுஞ்சில் மன்னிக்கிடந்துறங்கும்
சீரியசிங்கம் அறிவுற்றுத் தீவிழித்து
வேரியசிர்பொங்க எப்பாடும் பேர்ந்துதறி
ஒரிநிமிச்ந்து மூழங்கிச் சுறப்பங்குப்

வேலீ பூஷைப்பூவண்ணு! உன்
நுனே போந்தருளிக் கோப்புடைய
ததிருந்து யாம்வந்த
ந தருளேவரெழம்பாவாய்.

23

majestic lion crouching in sleep within the
பூஷை குகை in the rainy season becoming wakeful,
opening its fiery eyes (and looking red all round),
sizing on all sides with the hairs of its smellful mane
standing on end, shaking itself up, and majestically
standing erect starts roaring out of its cave and steps
out,—even so Oh! Blue-coloured one! issue out of your
Temple mercifully hither, and taking your seat on the
well-erected and befitting Throne, be pleased to enquire
of us the business and purpose that have brought us
here to you.

XXIV

அன்றிவ்வுலக மனந்தாயடிபோற்றி
சென்றங்குத் தென்னிலங்கை செற்றுய்திறல் போற்றி
பொன்றச்சகட முடைத்தாய் புகழ்போற்றி
கன்றுகுணிலா வெறிந்தாய்கழல்போற்றி
குன்றுகுடையா வெடுத்தாய் குணம்போற்றி
வென்றுபகைகொடுக்கும் நின்கையில்வேல்போற்றி
என்றெந்றுஉன்சேவகமே ஏத்திப்பறைகொன்வான்
இன்றுயாம்வந்தோம் இரங்கேலாரெழம்பாவாய்.

24

[They have seen Him sleeping. They wanted to see Him slowly
waking: now they want to see Him first walking and then
sitting. Sri Krishna obeys. He is walking towards them and
they at once start singing praises to His Feet].

You who then (in the remote past) measured this
world!

Praise and safety to your Feet

You who went forth and slew Lanka in the South!

Praise and safety to your Prowess

You who kicked the wheel (Sakata)

Praise and safety to your Fame.

You who threw (catapulted) the
wood-apple tree !

Praise and safety to your Feet.

You who lifted up the hill (Govardhana) like an
umbrella !

Praise and safety to your gracious qualities.

Praise and safety to the spear in your hand—the
hand that can vanquish foes by destroying their enmity.

Thus and thus, singing and praising your valour
and skill we have come to you to-day praying for the
Parai (Drum), Please to have compassion on us.

[The Tamil word பூர்ணி literally means praise. It is the vanquished's song of praise in honour of the victor. It has also another meaning in Tamil poetry, especially, Tamil religious poetry: and that is Safety. As the daughter of Perialwar who on first seeing Him, the Lord of all, began in the excess of his love and fondness towards Him to pray for His Safety, (the safety of the Saviour!) here is Sri Andal invoking protection to and praying for the safety of, Sri Krishna's Feet. His prowess and so on.]

XXV

ஒருத்திமகனுய்ப்பிறந்து ஓரிரவில்
ஒருத்திமகனுய் ஒளித்துவளர
தசிக்கிலராகுகித்தான் தீங்குநினைந்த
கருத்தைப்பிழைப்பித்துக் கஞ்சன்வயிற்றிக்
நெருப்பென்னநின்ற நெடுமாலே! உன்னை
அருத்தித்துவந்தோம் பறைதருதியாகில்
திருத்தக்கசௌல்வமும் சேவகமும்யாம்பாடி
வருத்தமும்தீர்த் து மகிழ்ந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

25

[And now they begin to unfold their hearts in prayer]

Having been born to one lady (Devaki-Devi) (One
night), within the (same) night you became Son to

, shoda) and like that you grew in alment. Kamsa not being able to put implanted to de evil to you but you put fault (by frustrating them). And you in his stomach (i.e. frightened and ~~பூ~~). Oh Trivikrama ! We have come ~~பூ~~ you, praying for getting you. If you give us the Parai we shall ever sing of (your) wealth befitting Lakshmi, and of (your) valour, and with our sorrows dispelled, shall rejoice for ever.

[The word *Parai* which has been translated as drum all along means that no doubt. But Sri Andal signifies by the use of that term Service or kainkarya to Him. That is her hearts' desire, her Purushartha. To be near Him and to satisfy their longing entertained for Him through ages of separation in the past is what the Gopis yearn for and that is what they mean when they use the word in this stanza. In the next one however where they indulge in the camouflage of the Nonbu the word has got to be given its ordinary meaning of drum].

XXVI

மாகீல! மனிவன்னு! யர்கழி நீராவூரன்
மேலையார் செய்வனகள் வேண்டுவனகேட்டியேல்
ஞாலத்தையெல்லாம் நடுங்கமுரல்வன
பாலன்னவன்னத்து உன்பாஞ்சங்ளியமே
போல்வனசங்கங்கள் போய்ப்பரடுமையனவே
சாலப்பெரும்பறையே பல்லாண்டிசைப்பாரே
கோலனிளக்கே கொடியே விதானமே
ஆவினிலையாய்! அருளேலோரம்பாவாய்.

36

Love incarnate ! Blue - Sapphire - coloured - one ! For the observance of the Margali Bath as per the custom of the revered people of old the following articles are required. Famous and reputed conches like your Panchajanya, which resemble milk in their whiteness, and can make all the world tremble by their noise : very big drums (or bheris) : reciters of Pallandu : beautiful lamps : flag : canopy. Oh ! You of the Vata (Hanvan) leaf ! Be graciously pleased to give us these.

[You created all the worlds lying on the Banyan leaf. That was for your delectation and our redemption. Now we want all the above. Create them for us. This is the idea underlying ஆனினிஸியாய்]

XXVII

கூடாகரவெல்லும்சீர்க் கோவிந்தா! உன்தன்னைப்
பாடிப்பறைகொண்டு யாம்பெறுசும்மானம்
நாடுபுகழும் பரிசினுல் நன்றாக
குடகமே தோள்வளையே தோடேசெவிப்பூலே
பாடகமேயென்றனைய பங்கலதூம் யாமணிவோம்
ஆடடயுடுப்போம் அதன்பின்னேபாற்சோற
மூடநெய்பெய்து மூழங்கலவழிவார
கூடியிருந்து குளிச்ந்தேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

27

{They now enumerate exultingly what all they will get by and through Him]

Govinda! whose greatness and sweetness subdue even your enemies! The reward that we shall obtain by singing of you and obtaining the Parai from you shall be the following, all excellent ones which all the world will praise and extol as the highest. All the several ornaments such as wrist ornaments, shoulder ornaments, ornaments for the lower ear, ornaments for the upper ear, ornaments for the ankles; all these we shall wear. We shall wear dresses (hallowed by your contact). Then we shall take food cooked in milk and covered with ghee so lavishly that the ghee flows down the elbow of the receiver. And we shall always be united with you and thus we shall feel cool and happy.

[கூடியிருந்து குளிச்ந்து. Contact with things and personalities of the world generates heat. But contact with God cools, and refreshes. This secret is let out by Goda who is more than God: else how can we mortals know?]

XXVIII

கறவகள்பின்சென்று சானம்சேர்ந்துன்போம்
அறிவொன்றுமில்லாத ஆய்க்குலத்து உன்தன்னைப்
பிறவிபெறுந்தனை புண்ணியம் யாழுடையோம்
குறறவர்தாமில்லாத கோவிந்தா! உன்தன்கூடு

உறவேல்நமக்குண்கு ஒழிக்க ஒழியாது
அறியாதபிள்ளைகளோம் அன்பினுல் உள்தன்னைச்
சிறுபேரழூத்தனவும் சீறியருளாதே
இதைவா! நீதாராய் பறையேலாரெம்பாவாய்

28

[This and the next one are marvellously beautiful stanzas. Dazed by the vigour of the assault they were making on Him and by the nearness to Him in His bedchamber they had as it were forgotten themselves till now. Now they realise with a pang their lowliness and His greatness. The first reaction is one of craving His pardon for their boldness. And they pray for it from Him in incomparably sweet and beautiful language. Every seeker after God passes through this stage of bashfulness before Him. But Sri Andal on behalf of the gathered girls has given splendid expression to it with a beauty and grandeur all Her own.]

We are small and insignificant Gopis born of a race whose vocation is to go to the forest behind the milch cattle and eat there, a race which has no claims whatsoever to knowledge. But it has been our great good fortune that You should have been born into the race we call our own. You Govinda! who have no wants and no imperfections whatsoever! The relationship between you and ourselves here cannot be done away with, try as you, or we, or all of us together may. (This much we beseech of you). We young girls in our ignorance have called you by small names in the abundance of our love towards you. Pray do not get offended at that.

Our Lord! give to us our hearts' desire (*Parai*)

[How many of us can honestly voice the feeling embodied in the beautiful phrase “உள்ளங்கொடுத்தவேல் நமக்கின்கொழிக்க வெறியாது” (the relationship between you and ourselves here cannot be done away with, try as you or we or all of us together may)? In what simple and unsophisticated language has Sri Andal here given expression to the sentiments indicated by the terms *Avinabhavam* and *Apritaksiddhariseshanam* with which philosophers frighten us! This is the excellence of this wonderful poem in that it expresses in sweet Tamil all the great truths of Visishtadvaita Siddhanta and Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya.

[Those who have studied the Bhagavad Gita will do well to compare the words of Arjuna (Bhagavad-Gita XI 41, 42) when he realises what a big Personality is officiating as his Charioteer, with the words of Sri Andal in these stanzas. The same awe-struck attitude of fear and penitence has imbued the hearts of the warrior of the Gita and the Girl of this Gitam (song) The language employed is entirely similar, appearing in places as if one is translating the other's words.]

XXIX

சிற்றஞ்சிறுகாலே வந்து உன்னிச் சேவித்து உன்
பொற்றுமகரயடியே போற்றும்பொருள்சேளாய்
பெற்றம்மேய்த்துண்ணும் குலத்தில்பிறந்து நீ
குற்றேவல் எங்களைக் கொள்ளாமல்போகாது
இற்கைப்பறைகொள்வான் அன்றுகாண் கோவிந்தா !
எற்கைக்கும் ஏழேழ்பிறவிக்கும் உன்தன்னேடு
உற்றேழுமேயாவோம் உனக்கேநாம் ஆட்செய்வோம்
மற்கை நம்காமங்கள் மாற்றேலோரெம்பாவாய்.

29

[And now we come to the crowning stanza. This contains the Prayer of Prayers, the Prayer for all and for all time.]

Very early in the morning have we come to you, and prostrating before you are praising your Lotus Feet. Please listen to the meaning (and purpose) of this. Having been born into a race which lives and eats by grazing cows, you cannot afford not to take us as your personal slaves. (Don't mistake our real aim) Oh! Govinda, we have not come to you for receiving the *parai* to-day (and going back). For ever and ever and for all lives to come we will always be related to you and we will serve you and only you. (All that we pray of you is) Please convert all our other desires (into a desire for you).

[A truly wonderful stanza. Note the tone of firmness in the language employed. It is the outcome of Sri Andal's undying faith in the certainty of the Lord's Grace and her unswerving hope in her higher destiny. The suffix “ஏ” in the Tamil language is used for emphasis. In the opening stanza we found Sri Andal talking of நாராயணன் நமக்கே பறைத்துவான்,

showing what an amount of faith she has in the protecting grace of Narayana and in the certainty of it to those who seek Him. And in this closing stanza again she uses the “ஏ” என்ன கேட்டதே மேயாவோம், எனக்கே நாமாட் கேய் வேரம். It is difficult to translate the first sentence. ‘We shall only be related to you’ is a literal translation, which, in English, does not read well. The idea that the Tamil emphasises is that related to you, we are unrelated to you we have no existence. The Visishtadvaitic inseparability again. We live only when we feel that we live for you. This is the *seshatva* or other-centredness which Sri Vaishnava philosophy insists on as its very essential. The service or *kainkarya* to Him alone, that is spoken of next is only a corollary of *Seshatragnana* or realisation of our dependent relationship towards Him. But by far the most beautiful words are the closing ones: மற்றை நம் காமங்கள் மாற்று. Convert all our other-desires. True to the Sri Vaishnavite doctrine of loving Him with all the love of one's being, Sri Andal prays not for the suppression of desires, but for the sublimation of them into God-desires. The meaning will be made clear if we have reference to Sri Prahlada's prayer to God, in which he prays for an all embracing love towards Him with all the intensity and extensity of the base desires of the common man towards the objects of the senses, Sri Prahlada there wants to love God with all the intensity with which the man-in-the-street hankers after the physical pleasures. In the same mood and strain Andal prays to Krishna that He be pleased to convert all her desires into desire for Him. This is what is known as *Bhagavat-kama* or God-passion.]

XXX

வங்காட்டல்கடைந்த மாதவகைக்கேவனை
 திர்வெள் திருமுகத்துச்சேயிகழையார் சென் றிரைஞ்சி
 அங்கப்பறைகொண்டவாற்றை அணிபுதுவைப்
 பயங்கமலத்தண்டெரியல் பட்டர்ப்பிரான்கோகத்சொன்ன
 சங்கத்தமிழ்மாலை முப்பதும் தப்பாமே
 இங்குஇப்பரிசுரப்பார் ஈரிரண்டுமால்வரைத்தோன்
 செங்கண்திருமுகத்துச் செல்வத்திருமரலால்
 எங்கும்திருவருள்பெற்று இன்புறுவரெம்பாவரய்.

30

Goda with the cool garland of fresh lotuses, who is the daughter of Pattarpiran of beautiful Srivilliputtur, has thus talked of the manner in which the well-ornamented girls (of Gokulam) with faces as bright and effulgent as the fullmoon repaired to that Madhava, who churned the wavy sea,—who is also Kesava,—and prayed to Him and obtained from Him that *Parai*. Whoever repeats here (in this world) the text of this Tamil Garland (of verses) belonging to the Sanga group of Tamil Poetry (or sung by a group)—all the 30 stanzas without an error—shall obtain every where (in this world and other worlds) the Grace of the ever rich Tirumal (Vishnu, the Consort of Lakshmi) with red eyes and beautiful face, and with four big mountain-like shoulders; and (with the help of that Grace) shall attain happiness.

[A befitting and happy *finis* to a glorious work of art. This stanza contains, as all *Phalasruthis* do, the name of the Author, the nature of the work and the benefits obtainable by a study thereof. Note particularly the very auspicious words with which the poem is wound up.]

GLORY TO SRI ANDAL

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கோகைதபிறந்தவர் கோகைத்தன் வாழுமூர்
கோதிமண்மொடம் சிதாங்குஸூர்—நீதியால்
நல்லபத்தர் வாழுமூர் நான்மஹநகளோதுமூர்
வில்லிபுத்தூர் வேதக்கொலூர்.

பாதகன்கள் தீர்க்கும் பரமாஷி காட்டும்
வேதமணித்துக்கும் வித்தாகும்—கோகைத தமிழ்
ஐயைந்தும் ஜுந்தும் அறியாத மாணிடை
வையம் கமப்பதும் வம்பு.

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THE ESOTERIC MEANING OF TIRUPPAVAI

(திருப்பாவை ஸ்வாபதேசம்)

We have now gone through the thirty verses of Tiruppavai in all their sweetness and beauty. They talk in a language which no one can fail to understand,—the language of the heart. After the obstacles created by their elders are put out of the way by their great good fortune, the girls of Gokulam make no error and seizing upon the Vratam or Nonbu as an ostensible cause, go straight unto Him,—their hearts' desire. They have realised that there is no straighter path to Him than singing His names and glory, and falling at His feet. Befriending those about Him they then pray to Him and his Consort to take pity on their plight and give them the help and succour they stand in dire need of. They make known to Him that they are His eternal slaves and cannot brook separation from Him any more; and He, realising the intensity of their love towards Him, gathers them to Himself. And they obtain the realisation and the joy of the Muktas, those freed from the bondage of Samsara.

A simple story sweetly told. But it is not given to everybody to be satisfied with what appears on the surface. Some find it difficult to appreciate in its naked garb the language of love employed in these stanzas. So they begin to delve for inner meanings and hidden indications. And in Tiruppavai they find what they want in abundance. Right from the beginning the song is a symbolic representation of the attempts of the Jivatma, the individual Soul, to reach the Paramatma or the Paramount Soul. There are several commentaries on the Tiruppavai in this strain and they are called *Svapadesa Vyakhyanas* or Esoteric commentaries. -

Briefly indicated, the spiritual idea behind the thirty songs of Tiruppavai is this:

(i) The time and the hour being propitious, the Jivatma after age-long bondage begins to get a taste for release. Release is only the negative aspect and the Sri Vaishnava Siddhanta, which postulates God-realisation as the ultimate release and home for all the Jivas, insists upon a taste for God. This taste for God (நோடப்போதுவீர் போதும்பேனு) is the only pre-requisite condition for pursuing the means of realisation. And when that appears in the individual, there appears in God what has always been present, in a dormant state, the will or the sankalpa to give the Jiva succour. (நாராயணனே நமக்கே பிறை தருவான்.) It has already been said that Parai indicates Purushartha, that for which the human heart longs. So Tatva, Hita and Purusharta are all indicated even in the first stanza.

(ii) What are the actions which we can pursue and what are those that we have to eschew ? The answer is given in the second stanza. Sing His glory (பரமணி பாடி). Don't do what ought not to be done (செய்யாதன செய்யோம்.) The rigours and mortifications of not eating ghee, milk etc., which are set out in this stanza indicate the *Vairagya* or spirit of renunciation of the pleasures of the world which must be present in every *Mumukshu* desiring the pleasures of Moksha. No one can serve God and Mammon together. But it will be seen that in stanza 27 all these objects of pleasure,—milk, ghee etc., are wanted. That is as part of God-realisation. We do not want it for us but with you we shall have all that and more. Just like Vibhishana taking up, at Sri Rama's behest, the kingdom of Lanka which he had spurned before.

(iii) Here they talk of the profit and pleasure that await those who help another in God-realisation. For having allowed them to go to Sri Krishna the elders are here promised prosperity in plenty.

(iv) Seeing their God, the only God, in all the gods. (The rain god is equated to their Krishna). The steadfast faith in one *Paradevata*, Sriman Narayana, from whom all the other gods emerge and in whom all of them merge is a distinct feature of Sri Vaishnavism. (பரதேவதா பாரமார்த்தயம்).

(v) Pursuing the Great Lord with all our three *Karanas*, mind, word and body (கரணத்ரயஸூமரஸ்யம்) is the only method உடையது by which we can destroy all our sins.

(vi to xv) These stanzas bring into prominence another peculiar tenet of Sri Vaishnavism. A solitary quest after God is not likely to be as fruitful as a quest in the company of the godly. Unlike earthly pleasures which dwindle on being shared with others, godly pleasure multiplies when it is partaken with others. The company of a right-minded person whose heart-throbs are all for God is a great asset in approaching God. Just as one takes help before getting into a flood, the tendency in every lover of God before he steps into the flood of God-love is to secure the help of similar lovers of God. Further one always desires to share one's pleasurable enjoyments with others. In that mood here we see Sri Andal waking up those that are not with her to get up and partake of the divine bliss that awaits them all. The company of the Godly is preferable to that of God Himself and rather than leave behind some of their number they would all tarry and delay their proposed visit to Sri Krishna.

One may ask: do the godly ever sleep and indulge in indolence so as to be roused into activity by others?

The answer to that is that they are not sleeping at all. They are imbued with the same god-love and are keeping awake. With Satrughna each of them could also have answered "No I am not sleeping. I am fully awake thinking of that very Person who occupies your thoughts". (Srimad Ramayana, Ayodhya Kanda 89-3) But though awake they are not able to get up. They are chained to their beds, as it were, by various and mixed feelings towards God which make it impossible for them to rush out and join their companions. At the top of the note on that each stanza, the particular mood of the girl who is sought to be roused by stanza has been indicated. It talks volumes about the psychological insight of Sri Andal that she could picture those several moods, personify them and sing them into activity so beautifully.

An attempt has been made, and is being made by several learned commentators and pandits, to say that the ten Alvars are being indicated by these ten stanzas,—One in each. It is a very good study and though it might not have been Sri Andal's intention to refer to any Alvar, still the words employed are capable of being so interpreted. It is a textual process and hence is not attempted here.

(xvi) It is the Acharya or Guru that gives God to us. So the Acharya's servants are being annexed here—the gatemen of Nandagopa's house.

(xvii) Then the Acharyas themselves and, God as one of them. It is a peculiar feature again of Sri Vaishnavism that God is an acharya—the first in the hierarchy. So Sri Krishna has a place in this stanza in between His parents on the one side and His brother on the other.

(xviii) *Purushakara Prapatthi* or the surrender to, and invocation of, the recommending grace of Lakshmi. Vide the prefatory note to this stanza.

(xix & xx) திவ்யதாம்பத்யம் : The truth about the Divine Couple. Surpanakha wanted Rama without Sita. Ravana wanted Sita without Rama. The fate that overtook both of them is a matter of history. The mistake of both is scrupulously avoided and it is made clear here that Sri and Narayana together are the hope and the joy of the individual soul. The goal of human endeavour is திருமால், that wonderful blend of திரு and மால். It is noteworthy that the last stanza of Tiruppavai winds up with this திருமால் note. We have to obtain that திருமால் only by the grace of that திருமால். So the Divine Couple have got a couple of stanzas to Themselves here.

(xxi & xxii) Surrender of the *ahamkara* and *mamakara*, the feelings of I and Mine. The words வலி தொலைந்து in stanza 21 are indicative of the destruction of the strength of the self, and the words அபிமானபங்க மாய in stanza 22 show the death of self-love. These stanzas end with emphasising the effect of God's *Katakshu* or gracious look. That and not enjoyment or expiation is the true panacea for our sins.

(xxiii) The majestic flow of Divinity into man. The throne on which they want him to ascend is the throne they have set up for Him in their hearts.

(xxiv) The first impulse on seeing God is to wish for his safety. Even one's petitions and appeals and prayers are postponed. That the reaction of fondness precedes even the prayerful attitude in a true lover of God is what is shown to us in this stanza.

(xxv) Remember what He can do to those who become His enemies. True wealth and happiness are the share only of those who worship him.